

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A photographing operation control device for an electronic still camera, comprising:

a volatile buffer memory that temporarily stores image data obtained through a photographing optical system and is configured to overwrite the image data with subsequent image data obtained from a subsequent photographing operation;

a blank photographing operation performing processor that performs a photographing operation in a blank photographing mode, such that upon photographing, said image data is stored in said buffer memory without being stored in a recording medium, when no recording medium is installed in the electronic still camera, when a recording medium without a blank recording area sufficient to store said image data is installed in the electronic still camera, and when a recording medium, having a blank recording area sufficient to store said image data, is installed in the electronic still camera;

a recording medium sensing processor that senses whether the recording medium is mounted;

a blank recording area sensing processor that senses whether a blank recording area exists in the recording medium;

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a normal photographing operation performing processor that performs a photographing operation in a normal photographing mode in which, after storing said image data in said buffer memory, said image data is read from said buffer memory and recorded in the recording medium; and

a photographing mode selecting processor that selects one of said blank photographing mode and said normal photographing mode, said photographing mode selecting processor being able to select said blank photographing mode when said recording medium sensing processor and said blank recording area sensing processor sense that the recording medium having the blank recording area is installed in said device.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein said photographing mode selecting processor comprises a photographing mode set switch, by which said blank photographing mode is set, and which is provided in a camera body of the electronic still camera.

4. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein said blank photographing operation performing processor performs said photographing operation in said blank photographing mode when said recording medium sensing processor senses that said recording medium is not mounted.

5. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein said blank photographing operation performing processor performs said photographing operation in said blank photographing mode when said blank recording area sensing processor senses that the recording medium has no blank recording area.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, further comprising an image data transfer processor that transfers said image data stored in said buffer to the recording medium.

8. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 7, wherein said image data transfer processor transfers said image data to the recording medium when said normal photographing mode is set.

9. (Original) A device according to claim 1, further comprising a mode informing processor that informs that said blank photographing mode is set.

10. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, further comprising a non-mounting condition informing processor that informs that the recording medium is not mounted.

11. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, further comprising a non-existing condition informing processor that informs that the recording medium has no blank recording area.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A photographing operation control device for an electronic still camera, comprising:

a system controller;

a volatile buffer memory for temporarily storing image data and which is configured to overwrite the image data with subsequent image data obtained from a subsequent photographing operation;

a photographing mode set switch for switching a photographing operation between a normal photographing mode and a blank photographing mode,

wherein, when said photographing operation is set to said normal photographing mode and an image is photographed, said system controller temporarily stores image data in said buffer memory and subsequently automatically transfers said image data to a recording medium,

wherein when said photographing operation is set to said blank photographing mode and an image is photographed, said system controller stores image data in said

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buffer memory and does not automatically transfer said image data to a recording medium, ~~and~~

wherein when said system controller determines that a recording medium is not installed in said electronic still camera, or said system controller automatically sets said photographing operation to said blank photographing mode, and

when a recording medium is installed but does not include a blank recording area sufficient to store image data, said system controller automatically sets said photographing operation to said blank photographing mode.

14. (New) A photographing operation control device for an electronic still camera, comprising:

a volatile buffer memory configured to temporarily store first image data and to overwrite the first image data with subsequent image data obtained in a subsequent photographing operation; and

a system controller configured to transfer the image data from the volatile buffer to a recording medium detected as having sufficient blank space to store the image data, unless a blank recording mode is selected.

STATEMENT OF SUBSTANCE OF INTERVIEW

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy of a telephone interview extended to Applicant's representatives (herein "Attorneys") and conducted July 12, 2005. During the interview, Attorneys explained features of the buffer memory recited in pending independent claims 1 and 13, noting *inter alia* that while the buffer memory of the present application generally relates to a memory storing image data which is overwritten by subsequent image data, the "internal memory 40" of TANIGUCHI and the "internal RAM 28" of MORONAGA are different at least because they are not discussed as being overwritten by subsequent photographing operations, in a non-limiting example. Attorneys also noted that the specification at page 7, lines 10-12 recites "A buffer memory 40, having a capacity large enough to store a frame of digital image data, is connected to the image signal processing circuit 39." In response, the Examiner indicated that such features do not appear to distinguish over the cited references.

Attorneys also noted that a buffer memory according to the present application may be configured as a volatile buffer memory, and may be purged when the electronic still camera is turned off, for example—and that in contrast, TANIGUCHI and MORONAGA discuss only a non-volatile "internal memory 40" and "internal RAM 28", respectively. The Examiner indicated that such features appear to distinguish over TANIGUCHI and MORONAGA.

No agreement was reached pending updated search and consideration when a Response is filed.